The Works of Stefan George

Marx, Olga, Morwitz, Ernst

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To spare you, I have let you guess askew
The reason why my sorrow is so deep.
I feel, when time has parted me from you,
You will not even haunt me in my sleep.

But when the snow has made the park a tomb,
Faint comfort, I believe, may still be told
By lovely residues: a note, a bloom,
In wintry silence, fathomless and cold.

JOURNEY THROUGH SNOW

The stones, which jutted in my road, have all
Been spirited away and softly shrined
In banks of snow. To distant skies it swells,
The flakes are weaving at a ghostly pall,

And when they touch my lashes with the wind,
They seem to flicker as when weeping wells.
I look to stars, for no one guides my quest,
They leave me lonely in the spectral night.

I wish that I could slowly sink to rest,
Unconscious of myself in drifts of white.
But if the tempest whirled me to the edge,
The gusts of death decoyed into their keep,

Once more for door and shelter I should make.
Perhaps that hidden there beyond the ledge
Of mountains, lies a hope of youth, asleep.
A first and tender breath — and it's awake!

I feel as if a glance had slit the dark.
So shyly you elected me to go
With you, your voice and gesture moved me so,
That I forgot our path was steep and stark.
You praised the grandeur of the silent earth
In silver leaves and frosty rays, unsown
With infelicities and strident mirth.
We christened her the pale, the chaste, the lone,

And to her strength and majesty averred:
The sounds which floated through the stainless air,
The shapes which filled the skies, were lordlier
Than any night in May had yet conferred.

We took the usual path with joy and fear
Time and again in late and moonlit hours,
As though we wandered, wet with dripping flowers,
Into enchanted woods of yester-year.

You led me to the valley spells enchain
With languid perfumes and a naked light,
And showed me from afar where tombs incite
A dreary love to grow in frosts of pain.

I may not kneel and thank you who were lent
The spirit of the fields which nurtured us,
And when I try to ease your wistfulness,
You draw away in token of dissent.

And is it still your cruel plan to keep
Your sorrow — kin to mine — in secrecy,
And only walk abroad with it and me
Along the river glazed with shining sleep?

That evening, when the candles had been lit
For you, I said a benediction and
Gave you a diamond, the most exquisite
Of all my gifts, placed on a velvet band.